Tips from a science communications consultant/coach

Beth Schachter, PhD

Beth Schachter Consulting

Helping scientists to communicate

Helping communicate science

Transitioning into science communications consulting and coaching

Honing my skills at

- Writing
- Speaking and story telling
- Networking and other people skills
- Running my own business, including marketing

Helping a scientist learn to write

- Nonfiction writing workshops - *E.g., Gotham Writing Workshop Nonfiction workshops*
  - *How I got my by-lined NYTimes articles*

- Online writing courses – E.g., at Poynter Institute
  - **Free program** by Roy Peter Clark – Writer's workbench: 50 tools you can use.

The scientist hones her speaking and storytelling skills

- Toastmasters International – find a local club
  - For speaking, preparing speeches, critiquing them, running mtgs

- The Story Collider workshops (science-related story-telling)

Use volunteer opportunities to hone communication and leadership skills

- Opportunities in professional organizations
  - E.g., Science Writers in New York
    - Board membership gave me an array of opportunities
  - Writing articles for American Society for Cell Biology newsletter
  - Volunteering at New York Academy of Sciences

Tips for effective communication

Writing as a learning process –Larry McErnerny's Craft of Writing Effectively

- First, write to figure out what you want to say
- Then rewrite and edit to communicate your message to your audience

The single most helpful article about clear professional writing

The science of scientific writing by George Gopen and Judith Swan

"In our experience, the misplacement of old and new information turns out to be the No. 1 problem in American professional writing today."

> In other words, writers often put new information first, but the reader may lack the context to understand it until the old, familiar information appears.
>
> To improve your writing, put the old, familiar information before stating what's new.

Professional Development to become an effective communicator

Practice!

Write a fellowship application

- Creative thinking and writing about your research
- Team building
- Project management to meet a deadline

WOMEN in Cell Biology

Jumpstart Your Academic Research Career with Your Own Postdoctoral Fellowship

Women in Cell Biology

Career Advice for Women and Men

With all the talk about the downsizing of the life-science academic research operation, we need to remember that downsizing doesn't mean shutdown. Many newly minted PhDs are opting to continue on the academic research track to become PIs. Getting their own postdoctoral training fellowships is a good way for those scientists to build the research skills and to further develop many of the leadership, managerial, organizational, and communication skills needed for heading an academic

Photo credit: Alice Braga

Who qualifies as a mentor/co-mentor?
Because postdoctoral fellowships support training and mentoring efforts, the applications are evaluated largely on the strength of the mentor and the mentoring/training plan: Is that mentor (or, more commonly these days, that mentoring pair or team) equipped to provide good training? Therefore the application needs to demonstrate that the primary mentor has a track record of successful training, not just successful scientific

Professional Development to become an effective communicator (continued)

Report on meetings that you attend, either by giving a talk or blog

Outline and draft your research manuscript(s) before your PI does, or in full collaboration with the PI

Time for some networking

Our groups – for increasing diversity of the STEM pipeline

NSF RaMP – Research and Mentoring for Postbaccalaureates

to gain research experience as a prelude to grad school

NIH G-RISE – Graduate Research Training Initiative for Student Enhancement

PhD students

Time for some networking

G-RISE fellow stand up

Find a seated person

Introductions - in both directions

- Who you are?
- Area of research
- One question you are asking in your research

Networking

What's your objective in networking

- New professional opportunities
- New collaborators
- Becoming part of/forming communities

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Making new connections

- Introductions
- Cold calling - I don't
- E-mail
- DM (to cell or via a platform)

Networking etiquette, and etiquette in general

Soft skills that grad students typically learn on the fly

But much time and energy could be saved by discussing these issues